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**The Monument to Wolfe on the Plains
of Abraham, and the Old Statue
at "Wolfe's Corner"**

By P.-B. CASGRAIN

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SAINT-LOUIS
EXPLORATION

IV.—*The Monument to Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham, and the Old Statue at "Wolfe's Corner."*

By P.-B. CASGRAIN, *Quebec.*

(Communicated by George Stewart, D.C.L., and read June 23, 1904.)

In a correspondence addressed to the Editor of *The Chronicle*, Quebec, July 8th, 1903, a loyal Englishman, of London, England, H. O. Mordaunt, Esq., as one of the thousand visitors to Quebec, praises this beautiful city, its unique panorama, fine buildings and statues, etc., but goes on to remark:—

"But will you allow a visitor from the Old Country to point out how, in one respect, Quebec has fallen far short of what might naturally have been expected of her. I refer to the column erected to the memory of Wolfe. A hero so illustrious in the Annals of the Empire, and associated at all times with the early history of Quebec, is surely deserving of something better than this insignificant and mutilated memorial, utterly dwarfed by the huge jail at its side, and not easily found, owing to the site selected being a side lane."

The truth of these remarks must be admitted to a certain extent. It may be said in extenuation thereof, that no appeal has ever been made to the public in general to raise funds for the purpose of erecting such a befitting monument on the Plains as one erected to Wolfe and Montcalm, in the Governor's Garden, in the year 1828.

The existing column, though modest in appearance, is not altogether unbecoming, when it is remembered that it was due to the public spirit and liberality of the few British officers serving in Canada, at the head of whom stood Sir Benjamin D'Urban, then Commander of the Forces therein, who had it erected in the year 1849, to replace the former dilapidated one, a truncated column, which was buried underneath, and which had been raised by Lord Aylmer in the year 1832, at his private expense.

Now that these Plains have lately been purchased by the Government of the Dominion, and have been given over to the city, they are, by express agreement, set apart as public domain for all time, with the view of making a park which shall be dedicated to the memory of the gallant foes who fought the celebrated battles thereon. Thus, the occasion is offered to take the proper steps to build, among others, a monument in keeping with the brilliant victory and glorious death of Wolfe; and more appropriate as commemorating the immense political results which followed this pregnant event in North America.

Furthermore, we may assert that, as an accompaniment of this gift, the patriotic intention of the Government of the Dominion was then expressed to ornament the park with appropriate historical memorials.

We may therefore anticipate that, under these favourable circumstances, an appeal to the public for this noble object would meet with general approval and a hearty response from every loyal British subject of the Dominion, and also from many true Englishmen abroad.

We may therefore hope that, within a reasonable time, Quebec will be able to boast of a monument on the Plains, comparable in style with the splendid and artistic monument to Champlain which now graces the Dufferin Terrace.

In the meantime, and in anticipation of carrying this idea into effect, we may be allowed to suggest three things, which must in due course be taken into earnest consideration:—

1st.—That the present column, marking the spot where, according to its inscription, *Wolfe died victorious*, ought not to be disturbed or replaced, as long as it shall last.

2nd.—That the proposed monument ought to be erected on the knoll where the Goal now stands, and as near as possible to the very spot where he fell, at the head of his men, wounded by the third and mortal shot, because this place is still more sacred than the other, where he was carried dying to the rear and expired after a few moments; and because it offers a better site as a dominant position for a lofty monument to be seen from the river.

3rd.—That, whatever be the style or design of this monument, it should be crowned or surmounted by a statue of General Wolfe; and this should be modelled from the best and most authentic portraits, paintings and engravings known of him, so as to render a truthful likeness and faithful resemblance of his person.

Among the number of these now extant, we make bold to indicate as the best and also the best known, the full-length one, with right arm uplifted, looking and pointing as it were towards Quebec, giving a correct profile, and moreover showing an excellent artistic design of his commanding attitude when he fell. This portrait is from a painting by Hervey Smith, his aide-de-camp, who was no mean hand at drawing and painting, and who had taken a sketch a few days before the battle with a view to the production of such a picture.

It is well known that, from olden times, Quebec had its statue of General Wolfe, and, as such, the first memorial to him in Canada; but few persons are aware that it was modelled from this painting when it was sculptured in wood in Quebec one hundred and twenty-five years ago. The conspicuous stand it occupied in a niche above the door,

on the second story of the corner-house of Palace and John streets, rendered it familiar to successive generations, and it attracted more general attention, owing to the fact that it was painted in vivid colours, representing exactly the full uniform of the General in 1759, and more especially on account of the tradition attached to it.

The origin of this statue deserves to be recalled on this occasion, because now is the time to follow the example of the true and loyal soldier, who not only ordered and procured this memorial of Wolfe, but, moreover, bought the house where he had it placed and where he intended it to remain for all time, as a tribute of love and admiration for the chief whom he had seen cut off in the prime of life on the battle-field.

Among the first English settlers in Quebec, immediately after the treaty of peace, we find, in 1761, the name of George Hips. Most likely he must have been one of the clansmen of the Fraser regiment, the 78th Highlanders, which was disbanded at Quebec in the fall of 1763. Hips (so he wrote his name) turned his claymore into a butchers' knife, got on very well in this other slaughtering business, and invested his earnings in real estate. He soon became a burghess of the town. He began early and carried on his trade until the year 1774, on a lot and house quite near the above-mentioned corner-house, and on the same side of John Street, now No. 60 (No. 2993 of the Cadastre), which he had bought from George Jenkins, master butcher, who was the owner of it in 1766, under a deed of conveyance from one Louis Aubry, before Panet, notary.

As in that year 1774, on February 3rd, Hips sold out to Henry Sweetland, it may be presumed he then abandoned his trade, and became thenceforth a burghess of the town.

We shall see that, in the meantime, he always kept alive the memory of the hero who had died on the Plains, and no doubt the empty niche which he could not help seeing every day gave him the idea of a fitting place for an effigy of Wolfe, if he could only procure one.

As both the corner-house and the statue referred to are closely linked together, a short notice of each may not be without interest on the present occasion.

This corner lot is situate within the domain of the Crown, and forms part of a piece of land acquired by the Hôtel-Dieu of Quebec from Dame Marguerite Couillard, widow of Sieur Nicholas Macquart, by deed dated 5th July, 1665, before Duquet, notary: the said widow holding the same from her mother by deed before the same notary of the 8th November, 1664.

Subsequently, in 1739, René Cartier had become owner of this corner lot, together with the two-storey house thereon erected, measuring thirty feet front on Palace Street (then rue des Pauvres), and thirty-four feet front on John Street; he also held the adjoining lot, containing forty-five feet additional, fronting on John Street. The first half he had acquired from Dame Agnès Chiquient, widow of Joseph Blondeau, by deed of the 31st August, 1730, before Pinguet, notary; and the other half by a conveyance from Joseph-Marie L'Escuyer, before du Laurent, notary, bearing date the 11th October 1730. Above the door, at the angle, a niche had been prepared for, and was occupied by the figure of a saint. This figure was taken away soon after the surrender of Quebec.

At the death of Cartier, in 1761, the property passed to Joseph Duval and Josephite Cartier, his wife, as heirs at law, and they sold it on the 5th July, 1771, by deed, before Saillant, notary, to one Duncan McCraw, a trader (*marchand-pacotilleur*), living in John Street.

McCraw sold to George Hips, said to be a master-butcher (*marchand-boucher*), but then a Burgess of the town of Quebec, as appears by a notarial deed before M^{re}. Berthelot d'Artigny, on the 20th April, 1780.

Here, it must be mentioned, as it is in this deed, that the conveyance was so made in pursuance of a previous written agreement between the same parties, bearing date the 15th September, 1779, which was declared to be cancelled and void, in consequence of the sale so effected. This private document is not to be found, and most likely was then destroyed. But it will be referred to hereafter, because it was about this time the statue was being carved in order to be placed in the empty niche of the saint, on the corner, which had remained vacant since 1763, and had suggested to Hips, as already mentioned, the idea of its being a fit place in which to place the effigy of Wolfe, as deserving also, as he thought, of some sort of terrestrial worship.

On the 1st of May, following the sale, Hips took possession of the premises, and thus secured the niche as a permanent site for the statue, which he then installed therein.

Unfortunately, he did not long enjoy the pride and satisfaction of beholding the object of his soldier-like reverence, for he departed this life within the year. By his holograph will, dated 10th April, 1781, he appointed as his executors Godfrey King, Isaac Roberts and John Barnsley, who caused this document to be registered in the English record office of the Court of Prerogatives, at Quebec, the 2nd May, 1781.

As such executors, they obtained leave to sell, by judicial sale, *licitation*, all the real estate of George Hips, and on the 7th June, 1781, the Court adjudged, as part thereof, the above corner-house and lot to

Godfrey King, being the last and highest bidder, at £595—the whole without any reservation whatever, save and excepting the statue of General Wolfe, which clause reads as follows by the judgment of the Court:—"sauf et excepté la statue du Général Wolfe, qui est dans un des coins de la dite maison, et tel qu'il a été requis par le dit George Hips de Duncan McCraw par acte devant Mre Berthelot d'Artigny, notaire, à Québec, le 20 Avril 1780."

The wording of this clause, it must be observed, was thus specially added by the same notary, d'Artigny, who also was the attorney for the parties, and in that capacity was prosecuting the judicial sale before the Court.

It seems evident he was cognizant of the import and real intention of the parties as to the written agreement on the 15th September, 1779, between McCraw and Hips (not sufficiently explained in the deed), and from which may be inferred the placing of the statue in the niche from and at that time. But it is certain it was in its place during the lifetime of Hips, and must have been ordered and finished before or, at least, during the year 1779.

Godfrey King sold the whole property in two lots, that is to say, the house called "Wolfe's Corner" to Henry Junken, on the 16th February, 1788, by deed before Descheneaux, notary, and the remaining part to John Rees, on the 12th February, 1791, by deed before the same notary. This second part was subsequently acquired by the same Henry Junken from Rees.

Ann Barbara Junken, widow of Henry Junken, and universal legatee of her late husband, sold the whole house and two lots to Cyriac Weippert, tavern-keeper, by deed before Voyer, notary, bearing date 7th July, 1810, with the exception of the statue of General Wolfe, reserved in the following terms:—"si ce n'est la statue du Général Wolfe, qui se trouve dans un des coins de la maison, laquelle est déclarée ne pas appartenir à la venderes e." The old tradition that this statue could never be sold seems thereby confirmed.

The children and heirs of Weippert and of his wife, Madeleine Sylvain, divided the estate coming to them, by way of a judicial sale (*licitation*), on the 10th September, 1819, and Cyriac Weippert, the son, bought the corner lot, "la maison à l'enseigne du Général Wolfe," for the big price of £3,010. The adjoining lot went to Benjamin Corriveau and Madeleine Weippert, his wife, and her sister.

Cyriac Weippert having become insolvent, the corner-house was seized and described as "la maison à l'enseigne du Général Wolfe," and adjudged by the Sheriff of Quebec to François Corneau, on the 18th December, 1826.

The widow of the latter, Marie-Louise Dubois, who had also become widow of Joseph DeBlois, sold the house to Messrs. François Evanturel and Isaac Dorion, two brothers-in-law, by deed before De Foy, notary, on the 30th December, 1846; and they also acquired the adjoining lot from Corriveau and consors, on the 17th March, 1847, by deed before the same notary.

Their intention was to erect new buildings fronting the whole lots, and they are those to be seen at the present day. Dorion was a builder by trade, but he did not forget, be it said to his honour, to respectfully keep alive the tradition concerning the effigy of General Wolfe. He made in the same corner and in the third storey of the new building a convenient niche, wherein it was duly replaced.

Singularly enough, when Dorion was demolishing the old house, he found in it a coloured engraving (14.3 x 10 inc.), corresponding exactly to the coloured statue, and as if intended to accompany it. This peculiar relic went afterwards to the late Honourable Frs. Evanturel, co-proprietor, and is now in the possession of his son, Colonel Evanturel, of this city, who has gathered from his father much interesting information about the effigy of General Wolfe.

The origin and authenticity of this remarkable picture and engraving is apparent by the following engraved inscription thereon:—

“From an original picture in the possession of Hery. Smith, Esq.
——Rich. Houston, Fecit.

MAJOR GENERAL JAMES WOLFE.

Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Forces, on the Expedition against Quebec.”

“Printed for J. Bowles & Son, in Cornhill, Eliz. Bakewell & Parker, opposite Birchin Lane, in Cornhill, J. Bowles, in St. Paul's Churchyard and Robert Sayer, at the Golden Back, in Fleet Street.”

All these well-known names, coupled together, carry conviction of genuineness and authenticity.

It is evident, at sight, the colouring is hand-made, with the object of giving the colour and facings of Wolfe's military uniform, and this process has caused the painting to adhere to the glass covering it.

The singular coincidence of finding this picture in the same house as the statue, and the reproduction of the same likeness and colour, in both, being perfectly clear, make it very reasonable to presume that the painted engraving was procured at the time by or for George Hips

from the Old Country, and to serve as a model for the sculptor, and remained with the statue.

We have a clue as to this drawing as well as to the sculpture of the statue from the late Mr. James Thomson, Sr., whose name is a household word in Quebec, and who was a personal witness on the occasion, having had the direction of the work.¹

Here is what he says on this subject, as taken down by his son, James Thomson, Jr., assistant-commissary-general, from his father's mouth, on the 11th August, 1828. It is to be found in the collection, *Thomson MSS.*, vol. 1, p. 4, in the library of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec.

As these notes have not been seen in print, they may as well be given here *in extenso*:—

"We had a loyal fellow in Quebec, one George Phipps (Hips), a butcher, who own'd that house at the corner of Palace and John Streets, still called "Wolfe's Corner," and it happened to have a niche, probably intended for the figure of some saint; he was very anxious to fill it up, and he thought he could have nothing better than the statue of *General Wolfe*; but he did not know how to set about getting one. At last he finds out two French sculptors, who were brothers, of the name of Chaulette,² and he asked me if I thought I could direct them how to make the likeness of the General in wood. I said I would, at all events, have no objection to undertake it, and accordingly they, the Chaulettes, tried several sketches, but they made a poor job of it after all.

"The front face is no likeness at all, and the profile is all they could hit upon, and which is good. The body gives a poor idea of the General, who was tall and straight as a rush, so that, after my best endeavours to describe his person (and I knew it well), and for which purpose I attended every day at their workshop,³ which was in that

¹ Mr. James Thomson, Sr., was sergeant in the 78th (Fraser Highlanders), and served under Wolfe at Louisbourg and Quebec. He knew the General perfectly well, and used to speak of his kindness to all his men, and to him in particular, addressing them all in private as "*Brother soldier*." When the Highlanders were disbanded, Mr. Thomson remained in Quebec, where he was employed in conducting divers military works. He died in 1830 at the ripe age of 98 years, leaving a most respected name.

² Thomas-Hyacinthe & Ives, menuisiers, fils de Pierre Chaulette, charpentier de vaisseaux, et de Marie-Catherine Lafêche. *Grefte de F. Têtu*, notaire, 21 avril 1812, et J. C. Panet, notaire, 1er octobre 1768. Ils étaient simplement sculpteurs en bois, et nos pas statuaire.

³ Mr. Thomson lived on the opposite side of the street, at the south-east corner of Parlor and St. Louis Streets; the workshop of the sculptors being situate where Mr. Campbell's stables are now erected, 45-47 St. Louis Street.

house in St. Louis Street, where the Misses Napier are now living (1828), and which is somewhat retired from the line of the street, the shop being itself in the projection wing. I say we made a poor General Wolfe of it.

"It has been several times pulled down by mischievous persons and broken and as often repaired by the several owners of the house, and much to their credit be it spoken, and still keeps its ground, and I hope it may do so until the monument is finished. (Wolfe and Montcalm, then being erected in the Governor's Garden).

"I suppose the original parts of the statue must be now as rotten as a pear, and would be moulded away, if it was not for their being kept so bedaub'd with paint.

"(The above frequently related to me by my father).

"J. Thomson, Jr."

Sir James LeMoine states that in fact the statue was modelled from drawings furnished by Mr. Thomson. *Histoire des Fortifications et des Rues de Québec*, p. 28.

It has no great artistic merit, but, viewed at a distance, it answered its purpose so well that it was ever looked upon as a cherished heirloom, belonging to the citizens of Quebec.

In 1838-9, some playful *middies* of the Royal Navy took down the statue in a youthful freak, and gave it a sea trip to Calcutta on a man-of-war, whence it came back with a broken arm.

Then it remained deposited for a time in the office of the Royal Engineers, now the "Garrison Club," St. Louis Street, where it was found, then again restored and replaced in its niche.

The Bell Telephone Company of Canada lately became owner of "Wolfe's Corner." They repaired the figure, as the wood was decayed and partly destroyed by dry rot, and would have shortly fallen to pieces if exposed to a storm. Thanks to the President of the Bell Company, C. F. Sise, Esq., of Montreal, who had heard of the tradition, it was preserved. In December, 1898, he presented it, through Sir James LeMoine, to the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec for safe keeping, with the sole condition that it should be placed where it might be seen by visitors, but not exposed to the weather. There it has found a proper shelter and a final rest in the library.

However, the disappearance of "General Wolfe" from the old stand he had so long occupied, and from which it was known he could never be removed, preyed upon the minds of many of the citizens of Quebec, and became an abiding regret to the elders when they gazed at the empty niche, and missed the honoured figure of the "General."

they had been accustomed to contemplate from their boyhood. To soothe their feelings, some of them united, and, thanks to the speedy exertions of our esteemed and vigorous octogenarian, John Jones, Esq., they had another figure of "*General Wolfe*" sculptured in wood, well made and duly painted in the proper colours, so as to copy the former one, and had it installed in place of the original, which had been removed, as we have said, to save it from utter destruction.

This *fac-simile* will now stand as a sign to maintain the old tradition of the two understood conditions attached to the original statue—one, that it was *never to be sold*, and the other, its permanency in the same site, according to the true intention of George Hips, and his legal assumption that he could have it surely fixed this way for all time. Thus far his object has been attained, and is likely to be long continued, for "*Wolfe's Corner*" has now become the property of our esteemed citizen, Alderman Bernard Leonard, Esq., and the new effigy may be looked upon as entrusted to safe hands to continue its care and destination.

The name of George Hips, as one of the earliest British settlers in Quebec, and one whose worthy deed has endowed the city with the first memorial to Wolfe in Canada, should never be forgotten by its inhabitants. We hope these few notes will help in that direction, and also to keep up the old tradition derived from him.

Referring again to the above remarks of our London visitor, as to the comparative meagreness of the present column on the Plains, it cannot be denied it is far from being proportionate to the world-wide renown of Wolfe, and the grand results of his victory.

For let us remember that the triumph of the valiant Wolfe on these Plains was the downfall of New France and the securing of the supremacy of England in North America; that hence was born a new and extensive British Colony; that the vanquished French colonists, after a heroic but hopeless defence, became peaceful subjects, and submitted loyally to the English Crown after the Treaty of Paris, according to the oath they had taken; that subsequently they did maintain and prove their true allegiance in resisting not only the allurements of the other revolted British colonists, but also the outside appeals and entreaties of their former countrymen allied to the rebels; that when Quebec was at the time the only stronghold standing against a numerous invading army they defended it, and finally crushed within its walls the assailing foes who had penetrated therein, forcing them to retreat; that again, some time afterwards, a handful of French Canadians repulsed a second invading American army.

THE MONUMENT
ON THE PLAINS OF ABRAHAM
QUEBEC

This series of momentous events in our historical annals, when recalled, may well produce a strong emotion of patriotic exultation throughout the Dominion of Canada.

And when we trace them back to their beginning in the daring feat and marvellous success of General Wolfe on the Heights of Abraham, and thence down to the wonderful growth and prosperity of this vast Dominion, all Canadians may feel proud of their past, and the four races, now fusing into one united people, can afford, much better than Quebec alone, to erect, with the abounding resources of Canada, monuments in marble and bronze appropriate to revive and perpetuate for future generations the noble deeds of our fathers, and, above all, to mark the spot where fell the immortal Wolfe.

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1840-1841

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